

THE INTER-RELATIONSHIP OF SUBSISTENCE
ECONOMY AND POPULATION PROBLEM:
A STUDY OF THE AKHA CASE IN THAILAND

PINIT PITCHAYAKAN
Tribal Research Centre
Chiang Mai, Thailand

May 1982

This report is presented as received by IDRC from project recipient(s). It has not been subjected to peer review or other review processes.

This work is used with the permission of Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

© 1982, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

A report of research undertaken with the assistance of an award from the Southeast Asia Population Research Awards Program (SEAPRAP), Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Republic of Singapore

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This report is a final fulfilment of the research project financially supported by the Southeast Asia Population Research Awards Program (SEAPRAP) for the year 1980-1981. The success of this study rests significantly upon various contributions.

My deepest gratitude is reserved for Mr. Wanat Bhruksasri, the Director of the Tribal Research Centre, for giving me his permission essential for this research undertaking. His continual encouragement in the later time claims the most important part in my success.

My special acknowledgement is given to Dr. Chob Kacha-ananda, my co-researcher, whose experience and talent have greatly contributed to the completion of field surveys and data analysis. His participation has made my research much easier.

I owe a great debt to Assistant Professor Sompong Shevasunt of the Social Science Research Institute, Chiangmai University, for his invaluable supervision. His advices and comments in the initial stage have greatly improved the quality of my work.

I wish also to thank all my field workers, even though their names are not mentioned here, who actually worked hard for me in data collection; Mr. Saranee Thaiyanun and Mr. Panop Sattayopat for data processing; and Mrs. A. Keen for the English correction.

Finally, my very sincere thanks and appreciation are due to the Southeast Asia Population Awards Program (SEAPRAP) for its grant; Dr. Wilfredo F. Arce, the former Coordinator, and Dr. Jesucita Sodusta, the current holder of the same position of SEAPRAP, for their worthwhile suggestions and considerable patience. Without their kindness and cooperations my research project would not have been brought to reality.

98241
312.8:330(50)

Pinit Pitchayakan P 5
Chiang Mai, Thailand
May 1982

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	i
TABLE OF CONTENTS	ii
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION	1
A. Background and Objectives of the Study	
B. Scope of the Study	
C. Research Methodology and Duration of the Study	
CHAPTER II: THE AKHA SOCIETY	6
A. Affiliation, Early Migration and Population	
B. Akha Settlement: The Village and the House	
C. The Household and Family Organization	
D. Kinship and Marriage	
E. Village Organization and Leadership	
F. Religious Beliefs	
G. The Study Villages	
a. General Characteristics	
b. Population and the Sample Size	
CHAPTER III: DEMOGRAPHIC CONDITIONS OF THE STUDIED VILLAGES	22
A. Population Classification	
B. Birth and Death	
C. Migration	
CHAPTER IV: THE ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS	29
A. Occupation	
B. Land Holdings and Products	
C. Animal Husbandry	
D. Household Properties	
E. Household Income	
F. Household Expenditure	
CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY	37
BIBLIOGRAPHY	43

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Recently, the Thai government and developers found that the Akha people are the poorest of the hill tribes occupying the highland of north Thailand. According to the most up-to-date data collected by the Lahu/Akha Survey Team in 1979, there are approximately 136 Akha villages with 18,863 people inhabiting the provinces of Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Lampang and Phrae. The people are widely dispersed in the rugged hilly areas and practice shifting cultivation. It is estimated that only one-third of them reach the level of adequacy in their living standard while the remainder are in the poorest level of the traditional subsistence. Generally, they lack essential means for survival, i.e., foods, clothes, medical services and proper housing. This makes it difficult for them to make a living. Adding to such misery is the fact that many Akha, men and women, in the past few years have left their traditional homes for beggary and prostitution in the cities of Chiang Rai, Chiang Mai, and even Bangkok. Such loss of the traditional pride has cost them dearly in the deterioration of their society and sunk them to the lowest ebb of their being "Akha".

It is believed that one of the most important causes of Akha's suffering is the imbalance between the existing economy and the poor management in Akha population structure. While the Akha economy remains subsistence the Akha population continues to increase by natural growth and migration. Lewis (1973) reported that the rate of increase by birth in the Akha society is 5.49 per annum while that of the northern region of Thailand, as found by W.C. Robinson between 1972-1981, is only 2.0. If this growth continues at the same rate Akha population will double within thirteen years. The present economy would not be able to sustain this increase. In addition to this an increasing number of Akha immigrants and others come from the neighbouring countries such as Burma and Laos. In the past decade the

northern borders already inhabited by the Akha have to accommodate more immigrants from outside. This directly results in the reduction of the land resource which was formerly sufficient for rice cultivation.

The growing awareness of the Akha's problem has raised some critical questions in the minds of government developers. The most significant question is how to help the Akha tackle their problems and thus improve their living standards. Many have become concerned with the means through which the betterment of Akha economy and population structure could be adjusted effectively.

As we can see solution to these problems are not beyond our reach. In doing this, however, more reliable data and information about the Akha must be made known. In the past, only a few superficial reviews of the Akha were made and they hardly revealed the reasons for their failure.

This study aims to bring to light some cultural overtones which lay hidden in the heart of the Akha economic system and demographic management, to present and discuss them in more detail, and to suggest a possible solution to the problem which has a bearing on Akha economic life. The major objectives are set out as follows:-

- to investigate the principal aspects of Akha subsistence economy relevant to their present population;
- to discover the constraints in Akha living;
- to seek suitable means through which a new trend of economy could be made beneficial to the Akha people; and
- to help them solve their economic problems and lift their standard of living.

B. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study concentrates on the interrelation between subsistence economy and population of the Akha people in north Thailand. In this research an attempt will be made to give answers to the following questions:

- a. Could the subsistence economy practiced by the Akha people today support them effectively?
- b. If not, what would be a suitable substitute to replace the existing system?
- c. How can the Akha economy and demographic structure be improved?

Regarding the above questions the following aspects of Akha economy and demography are surveyed: population structure of villages and households classified by age, sex, birth, death, fertility, acceptance of family planning, migration, occupation, land tenure, production, animal husbandry, labour use, property, income, expenditure and debt.

This research study includes 10 Akha villages, 206 households, and 1,260 people. All villages are situated in Chiang Rai province, the largest base of the Akha tribe in Thailand. As compared with the Lahu/Akha Survey's figures, the sample size represents 7.3, 6.7 and 6.7 per cent respectively of the total Akha population of Thailand.

The selection of the villages in this study is not made on a random basis. It rather focuses on the areas in which certain kinds of development have reached their zenith, the areas currently under government care and, finally, where the villages to be surveyed were accessible. The villages chosen are divided into two. The first five villages are in the so-called development zone and under the close administration of the Department of Public Welfare. All households in these villages are interviewed in connection with their population and economy. The remaining five villages are also under the government care but situated in separate locations. They are included in this study for purposes of comparison. The sampling of each of these villages is drawn deliberately in relation to the number of villagers being involved in all sorts of family planning, as reported by our pre-survey team in the early stage of the research. Where the number is less than ten the whole is taken but a fifty per cent sample is sought where it exceeds ten. The findings obtained

from this latter source will be used for comparison while those gained through the first five villages are to be treated as the base for analysis.

C. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DURATION OF THE STUDY

The interdisciplinary anthropological method was used in this research project. Field survey and data collection were carried out through the combination of participant observation and interview. Participant observation was employed in the key village for eight months, from November 1980 to June 1981. During this period several field data collectors were sent to make surveys with questionnaires on the Akha economic-population characteristics of all Akha villages in the sample. At the completion of the field survey, data obtained was manually tabulated and analysed at the Tribal Research Centre in Chiang Mai. The analysis was based upon raw data compiled from the field work.

To make the final statement in this introduction, this study is just a rudimentary survey of the Akha economy and population. Because of a lag in the recognition of the key problem, solution to the Akha misery is still far from discovery. Diagnosis of the Akha poverty and the swelling of their demographic structure have to rely heavily on the past findings. It seems that the hope of success in the future lies significantly upon explicit understanding of the existing situations.

As mentioned earlier, the key objective of this study is to assist the Akha people to improve their living standard through improved food production. Despite the inclusion of many other elements in the recent years a successful improvement would rely vigorously upon the re-adjustment of economic management and demographic configuration. Because of the dominance of this interplay this study provides and suggests a wide scope for possible solutions to the problem to enable the Akha to improve their standard above the present state.

The overall accuracy of this study is verbally tentative, preliminary and subject to future revision. It is hoped that future findings will help to correct any mistakes and errors present in this study.

CHAPTER II

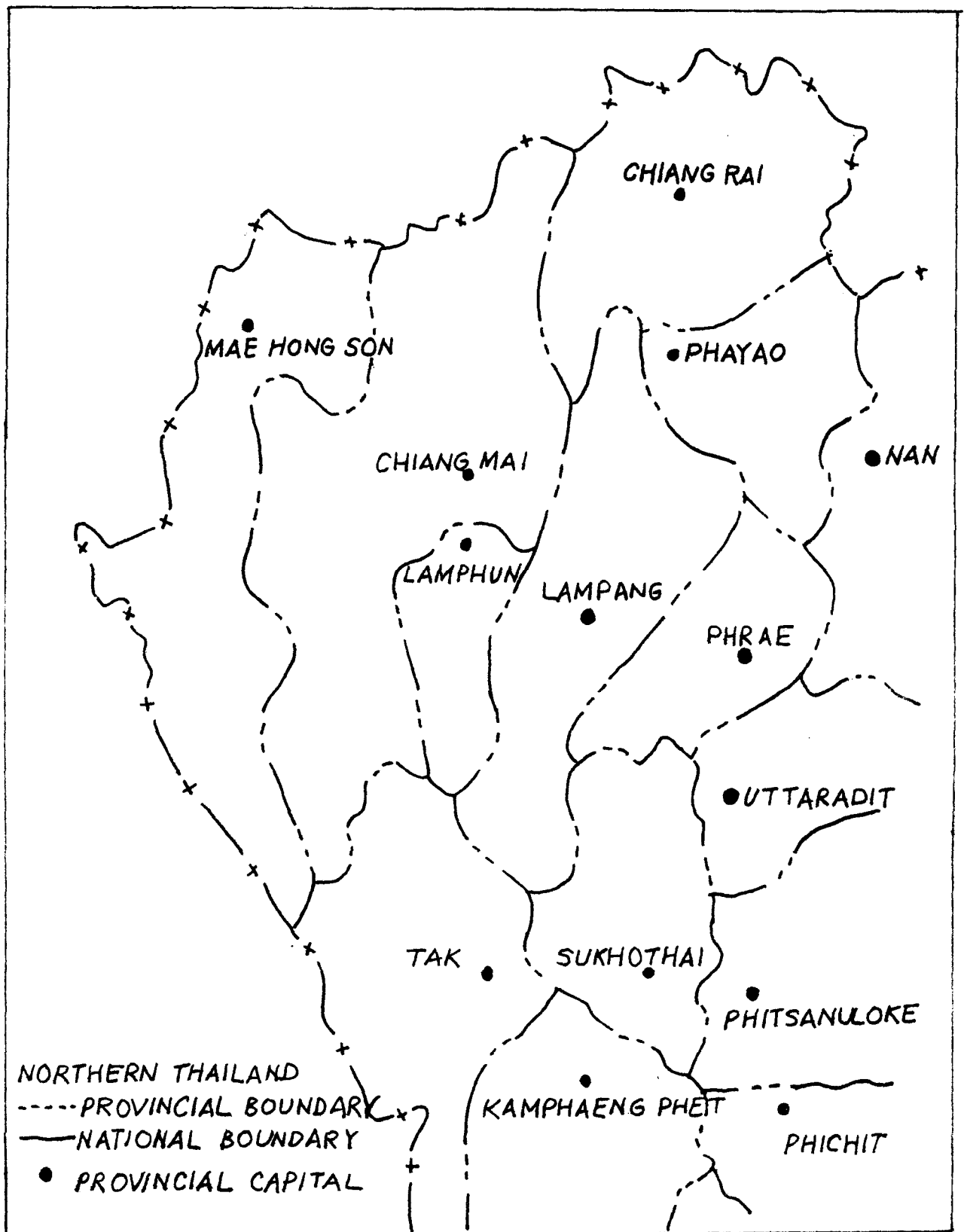
THE AKHA SOCIETY

A. AFFILIATION, EARLY MIGRATION AND POPULATION

In north Thailand, the non-Thai upland minorities are divided linguistically into two major groups, Sino-Tibetan and Austro-Asiatic. The Akha belong to the first group (Lebar et al, 1964). These mountainous nomads are also identified with the Tibeto-Burman branch. In fact, the speakers of the Akha tongue spread over a large area stretching from Yunnan province of South China to northern Laos, eastern Burma and north Thailand (Dellinger, 1969: 2). Regarding their ethnicity the Akha are part of the Loloish who once occupied the southern hemisphere of the mainland China.

The Akha have no native script of their own except that devised for them by the European missionaries years ago. They have their own spoken dialect and have learned the Lahu and northern Thai languages to communicate with outsiders.

The Akha people are believed to have originated from the Tibet Highland some four thousand years ago (Bernatzik, 1974). During the past centuries they were periodically influenced by some stronger ethnic groups in Yunnan and some were forced to leave their homeland for good. The early Akha migration appeared southward to Yunnan, Kweichow and Sipsong Panna of the mainland China. With the Chinese Nationalist debacle in 1949, waves of tribesmen in Yunnan fled the battle scene (Van Roy, 1971: 77). This partly resulted in an influx of Akha into the northeastern territories of the Burmese Shan State (Kengtung), Laos and north Thailand. Added to this incident is the unrest between the Burmese and the Shan that pushed thousands of Akha residents to emigrate. The majority of the Akha in the Kingdom today come from Burma.



MAP I
NORTHERN THAILAND

Similar to other tribes in the country, the Akha people are relatively recent immigrants, most having filtered through the Thailand-Burmese frontiers within the past century. As several Akha elders recalled, the pioneer of all Akha in Thailand is the JoGuoi sub-group who are estimated to have come at the end of the nineteenth. (This sub-group presently form the majority of the Akha population in Thailand.) The estimate seems to agree with the recent report of the Tribal Research Centre which shows the Akha's first arrival was in 1914. The immigrants of this time had been progressing south only by slow leap-frog jumps. Most seemed to confine their living to the area of Mae Chan, Mae Sai and Muang districts of Chiang Rai province, above the north bank of Mae Kok river (Young, 1966). A few decades afterward, however, many Akha began to spread over for better cultivable land. Various surveys undertaken recently reported that about 18 Akha villages were later found in Mae Suai of Chiang Rai, Mae Ai of Chiang Mai, Ngao of Lampang and Song of Phrae.

As political uncertainty became intense in the Shan State over the past years, a number of Burmese Akha outmigrated. Following the JoGuoi came the Mopo and the Loimi sub-groups whose settlements centred effectively around the roadway to Doi Tung of Mae Sai and in the upper parts of Mae Chan catchment. Among these three sub-groups the Mopo are the latest entrants because they came only twenty-five years ago.

At present, the Akha are found in four countries: China, Burma, Laos and Thailand. Accurate numbers of Akha population in each country is not known due to lack of anthropological data. The figures shown below are based upon the past collections made by each country at separate points in time.

To date, no official census has ever been made of Akha population in Thailand or of the other countries. For this reason the total figures shown in Table 2 could be far lower than reality.

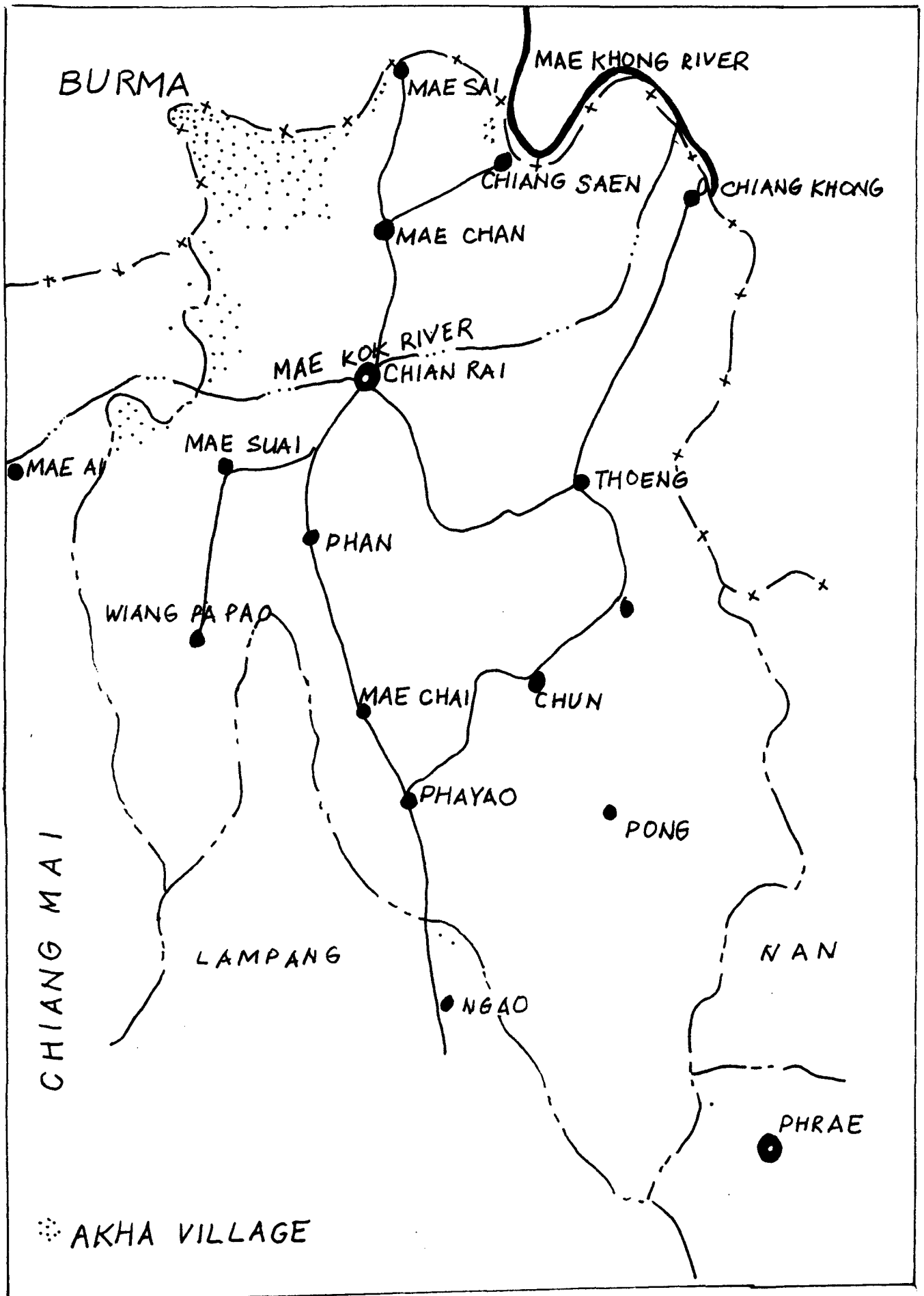
Table 1. Approximate Number of Akha Population

Name of Country	Source of Information	Number of Population	Year of Survey
China	Chinese Information Source	48,700	1938
Burma	Hugo Bernatzik	40,000	1931
Laos	Roux & Tran	4,500	1954
Thailand	Lahu/Akha Survey	18,863	1979
Total		112,063	

Table 2. Akha Population in Thailand, 1979

Name of Province	Name of District	Number of Population		
		Villages	Households	Population
Chiang Rai	Mae Chan	94	2,054	12,872
	Muang	15	265	1,654
	Mae Suai	13	361	2,122
	Chiang Saen	5	93	415
	Mae Sai	4	185	1,188
Chiang Mai	Mae Ai	2	52	315
Lampang	Ngao	2	27	160
Phrae	Song	1	27	137
Total		136	3,064	18,863

- Average household per village	22.5
- Average population per village	138.7
- Average people per household	6.2



MAP 11

Their accuracy too is doubtful. Any official surveys in the near future also seems impossible because of many difficulties such as political infiltration, lack of funds and inaccessibility. It can be said that the data available is accurate only at the time of the surveys. This perhaps is due to the semi-nomadic characteristic of the Akha themselves that causes official enumeration discrepancy. As explicitly seen most Akha engage in the never-ending stream of migration while separation of an individual group from a mother village often takes place. These incidents not only increase the number of Akha in one place and diminish it in others but also confuses the picture of Akha population considerably.

B. AKHA SETTLEMENT: THE VILLAGE AND THE HOUSE

Similar to other ethnic groups in north Thailand, the Akha settlement is found only in the form of village. It is characteristically placed just below the crest of secondary ridge on fairly steep terrain. Most villages are found above 3,500-4,000 feet but not as high as the Meo and Lahu (Lebar et al, 1964: 34). Generally, they are today situated in an area of secondary forest surrounded by abandoned swiddens. Ideally, the village site must be physically attractive and meet with the approval of the forest spirit. At least there must be a clean water source, forest, fertile soil and good vegetation around and in the close range of the village compound. Significantly, the number of land in its environs must be large enough for all to cultivate rice and corn.

A traditional Akha village is not fortified even though most have well-marked territories. Every village has a number of trails and paths into and out of it over which fences are erected to prevent domestic animals from wandering around to damage field crops in the growing season. In front of the village stands the gates called lok kho. The gates are sacred and elaborately decorated with wooden figures, carved statues and bamboo rings. Near the gates are located sacred swings and a courting ground.

The Akha settlement varies in size from and around ten to as many as a hundred houses. Each one comprises of between 100-300 people with 6.5-9.0 persons in average. In Thailand, however, only a very few settlements of more than a hundred households and several hundred people are found.

The Akha house is very simple in its design and construction. It is not built in an order or in a row. It is raised on a steep slope and has at least the front portion above the ground. Most houses are built on short piles and only a few are erected straight onto the ground, like houses of the H'mong and Yao. Walls and floors are usually made of split bamboo or wood while roofs are of thatch-grass. Inside the house is partitioned into two sleeping sections, one for men and the other for women and a cooking part which is also used for preparing food for pigs. The traditional Akha houses are fenced. Within the fence lies a barn for grain and a small hut for a married son and his wife, if any, to sleep together at night time. Practically, Akha couple do not sleep in the same room. No reasonable explanation is given on this matter except the claim of fear of evil spirits.

C. THE HOUSEHOLD AND FAMILY ORGANIZATION

The most effective kin-group in Akha villages is a household. There are two types of household, the single and the extended. The single household consists of just one family comprising husband, wife and children. The extended household occurs when a married son brings his family in to live virilocally. In many cases, nevertheless, an extended family exists only for a short time. Once the married son split to build up his own domicile independently the extended household ceases.

As mentioned earlier, an Akha household stands as a core for all activities and rights. Thus, within this domain individual members possess rights and claims to land, property, products and so forth. All their social, political, ritual, religious and economic

responsibilities are determined in this bound. The household head, being the most senior married male or the eldest married son is recognised as leader whose responsibility is to care for the well-being of all household members. The head is not only responsible for domestic affairs of his own household but he also has duty to represent it in a wider context of community cooperative enterprises, such as the construction of a lok kho gate, digging pathways, repairing village fences, cleaning up water wells, giving a hand to public works and joining in the village council in making decisions affecting the community as a whole. Additionally, it is a rule that all households must contribute to public affairs either in cash or in kind irrespective of the number of its members.

D. KINSHIP AND MARRIAGE

Akha people trace descent through a male line. Thus children are considered related to the father's family surname and to ancestral spirits of the paternal household. Members of each household are characterised by patrilineal surname. The Akha ideology of patrilineal lineage is important as it is regarded as the most crucial indicator of marriage, post marital residence and inheritance.

Principally, Akha marriage is monogamous and exogamous. This means that an Akha man has only one wife and shall not marry a woman of the same clan. Kinship relation is always counted up to 3-4 generations to make sure that a bride and bridegroom do not belong to the same lineage or surname and are not relatives as prohibited by the traditional rules, i.e., close relative within the three generation range. Incest is strictly prohibited. Therefore, marriage between siblings and relative of the first and second cousins can never take place or be accepted. There is an exception, nevertheless, in that when elders of a clan consider it to become too large and that makes it difficult for young members to marry they may, by mutual agreement, declare their respective families unrelated. After this declaration some members of the clan split to establish a new

clan free from the original one, and as a result, its members can marry the members of the original clan.

Akha marriage is not arranged by parents of the prospective couple. In general, it results from courtship and decision of a boy and a girl. Marriage is held in a boy's house and wedding festival lasts only one day. Even though no bride price is demanded a groom's family pays all expenses in the wedding.

Post-marital residence of Akha is virilocal. Thus, after his marriage a man and his wife live together with his parent's family as long as he desires. He later may separate to build a house of his own in the same village or elsewhere.

E. VILLAGE ORGANIZATION AND LEADERSHIP

Each Akha village consists of several houses, approximately 20-40 in average. There maybe a few clans living together with one largest clan standing as a core of the community. All villagers recognise one man from any of the clan as "chief" to lead them. The Akha name for the chief is Dzoe Ma who in effect assumes both administrative and ritual roles. Yet the most important role is seen as a ceremonial leader or as a village priest. His social status is ascribed and hereditary.

In the political and judicial arenas, the village chief has a council of elders as his consultants. The council comprises of aged persons in the village and is assisted by representatives, one from each household. The chief together with the council and the representatives function hand-in-hand in all issues affecting the village, i.e., settlement of disputes and making decisions over migration.

Apart from them, there are also other important figures whose social status is dominant in their Akha society. Baji (blacksmith), Phima and Phiya (spirit doctors) and Yeepa (medical doctor) are highly regarded by villagers because of their indispensable services.

In various stages of the life cycle an Akha individual depends a great deal on them and because of this importance they gain places automatically in the ritual, social, economic and political fields of Akha village.

So far, a supreme chief had never existed among the Akha people in Thailand. A village chief has decisive authority only within his own village and over his own people. His leadership role does not extend to other villages unless he is appointed officially by the local Thai government to do so. Such appointment, if any, is not regarded by Akha as an Akha chief in tradition for whoever can obtain it.

F. RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

Akha religion is animistic. In north Thailand most Akha people believe strongly in ancestor worship, supernatural beings and all kinds of spirits. The supernatural beings are gods and goddesses who live in Heaven and come to the world when invited. The supreme god is named A Phu Mi Yae and is believed to be the creator of the universe. Sumio is the creative god who created the world and is thought to be the first forefather of all Akha.

Spirits are divided into two groups, evil and benevolent. The benevolent spirit is an ancestral spirit who resides in a special world, separate from the world of human beings. Every Akha house has an altar for the spirit. During special occasions, nine times a year, the spirit is invited to the altar for a feast. Other spirits are considered malevolent who stay everywhere in the world such as in trees, water, soil, stream, rocks, paths, and animals. These evil spirits cause illness and bad luck when violated. To prevent them from entering a village compound to attack villagers each Akha village builds a lok kho gate as a sacred fence and a shrine to accommodate them outside the village. In addition, the Akha people also have spirit doctors, Phi Ma and Phi Ya, to

deal with them when necessary. These ritual practitioners handle two tasks, to determine which spirit is causing illness and misfortune and secondly, perform ritual sacrifices. In some cases they cure sickness in persons as well.

Among all tribal groups in north Thailand, the Akha are counted as the strongest animists. They stick to their beliefs and tradition such that it is difficult for any to try to have them changed. The religious belief always has a part in all affairs of Akha life. At present, government attempts face a number of prohibitions. Being the most tradition-oriented people, they have hundreds of rules to observe and severe punishment for offenders. A number of such prohibitions still remain today despite modernization and contact with the outside world.

G. THE STUDY VILLAGES

a. General characteristics. Ten Akha villages are included in the sample of this study. Geographically, all villages chosen are in Chiang Rai province which is connected to the Southernmost borders of Burma. The average altitude of the village settlements is at approximately 576.20 metres above sea level. Situated in hilly territory, the villages are surrounded by deserted swidden fields, bush fallows and cogon-grass pampus together with bamboo clusters. The surrounding land has been used repeatedly for several generations, such that its fertility no longer exists.

All the villages are at present under government local administration at the sub-district level. At least headmen of two villages are appointed officially while four other are given assistant positions with salary and social benefits. All villages selected are accessible by a dusty roadway which can be used nearly all year round. The provision of a roadway has greatly assisted the Akha people in their communication with the outside world, especially the lowland Thai market. A two-rows small taxi and motorcycles have recently become essential parts of their travelling and their products are exported through these means. The average distance of the ten

villages from the mainroad, say the Chiang Mai/Chiang Rai/Mae Sai Highway, is sixteen kilometres.

Today, because of land limitation translocation of a whole settlement from place to place seldom takes place. For this reason, most Akha villages have become more stable and permanent in one particular site than they used to be in the past when land was ample. Presently, only an individual household or a small group migrates. Yet the splitting group does not tend to move a great distance from their origins. As shown in the sample survey in Table 3 in the following page, Saen Chai Kao is the mother village of Saen Chai Mai while Huai San Kao is that of Huai San Klang. The separation of this type is common among Akhas in north Thailand.

Most Akha villages today have been receiving state services of some kind. In particular, the services are provided by the Department of Public Welfare in the form of first aid, schooling, agricultural extension, sanitation and so forth even though only ten of all Akha villages in the Kingdom are so far selected as centres for welfare and development. In the study, four villages have such development units with temporary schools. There are still few other buildings which are not essential. Other types of government aid come into the villages periodically and appears in the form of mobile services. There are malaria eradication teams, medical teams, and team from the Forestry Department. These agencies show up only once or twice a year while a number of retail traders from the lowland always visit the villages with food and vegetables. Because the Akha people are not keen traders, all villages thus appear to have only five small stores selling a few items of goods, i.e., cheap and low quality clothes, sweets, instant foodstuffs, painkiller medical powder for opium addicts, tobacco, kerosene and cigarettes.

With a few exceptions of one trader and a few wage earners, all Akha in the study villages are swidden farmers in the hills.

Table 3. General Features of the Study Villages, 1981

Village Names	Locations of Villages (District)	Government Services Provided			No. of Hhs.	No. of Pop.	No. of Shop	Age of Villages
		Develop-ment Unit	BPP* Unit	School	Water Supply			
A Yo Mai	Mae Chan	1	-	1	1	25	142	- 10
Saen Chai Mai	"	-	-	-	-	40	213	- 10
Saen Chai Kao	"	-	1	1	-	45	257	1 50
Huai San Kao	"	-	-	-	-	34	211	- 53
Huai San Klang	"	1	-	1	1	20	110	1 4
Saen Suk	"	-	-	1	-	41	233	1 11
Samakki Mai	"	-	-	1	1	27	202	- 5
Pha Mi	Mae Sai	1	-	1	1	87	612	2 23
Doi Sango Bon	Chiang Saen	-	-	-	-	31	140	- 50
Huai Pa Kho	Mae Suai	1	-	1	-	65	414	- 17

* Border Patrol Police Unit

All Akha in the study villages are animists despite their claims of having adopted Buddhism. Worshipping premises either in the form of church, temple or other do not exist in the villages.

b. Population and the sample size. Figures on the total population of the studied villages and the sample size appear as follows:

Table 4. Population and the Sample Size of the Study Villages

Village Names	Total Population		Sample Size		Percentage**	
	No. of Hhs.	No. of Population	No. of Hhs.	No. of Population	No. of Hhs.	No. of Population
A Yo Mai	25	142	25	142	100	100
Saen Chai Mai	40	213	40	213	100	100
Saen Chai Kao	45	257	45	257	100	100
Huai San Kao	34	211	34	211	100	100
Huai San Klang*	20	110	20	110	100	100
Saen Suk	41	233	7	43	17.0	18.5
Samakki Mai	27	202	8	64	29.6	31.6
Pha Mi	87	612	9	80	10.3	13.1
Doi Sango Bon	31	140	7	43	22.5	30.7
Huai Pa Kho	65	414	11	97	16.9	23.4
Grand Total	415	2534	206	1260	6.7	6.7

* key village chosen for intensive study

- villages 1-5 are thoroughly surveyed

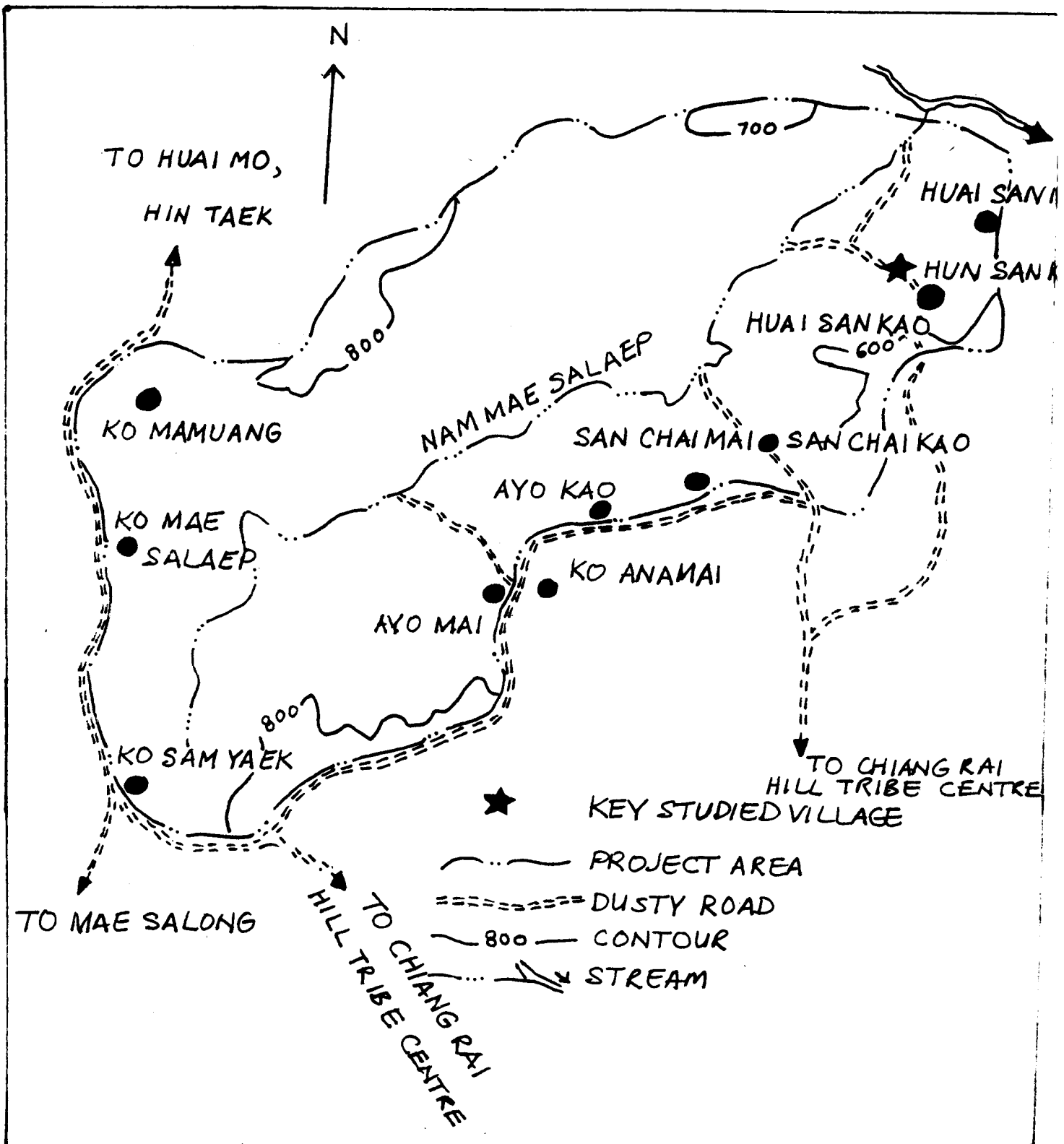
- villages 6-10 are samples based on the number of participants in all types of family planning. Where the number is less than ten all are taken, and only fifty per cent is counted where it exceeds ten.

- average household per village 41.5

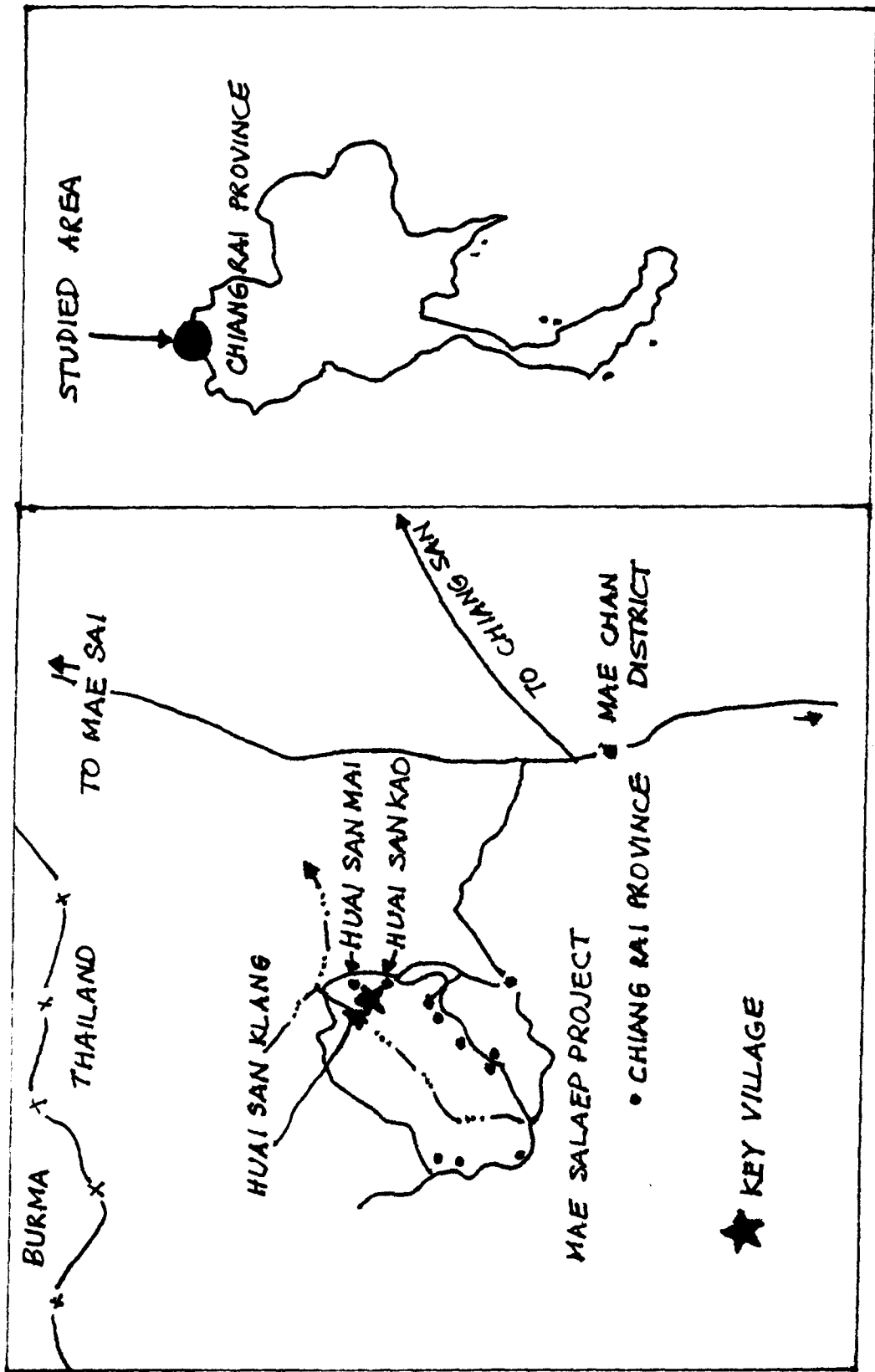
- average population per village 253.4

- average people per household 6.1

** compared with total Akha population of Thailand



MAP III: SHOWING THE LOCATIONS OF FIVE AKHA VILLAGES
THOROUGHLY SURVEYED



MAP IV: LOCATION OF THE KEY VILLAGE

CHAPTER III

DEMOGRAPHIC CONDITIONS OF THE STUDIED VILLAGES

A. POPULATION CLASSIFICATION

Table 5 shows the configuration of Akha population in the sample survey as classified by sex, age-group, and age at fertility. By dividing them as such it appears that members of the 0-14, 15-44 and 15-59 age groups dominate the largest part of Akha population. The figures indicate that the so-called fertility age group, 15-44, has had some effect on the increasing Akha population. Because of the number of those in the younger age group it is to be expected that growth will be very rapid indeed when they reach fertility. This is vividly supported by the figures on Tables 9 and 10 showing Akha marriage at a very high rate. There is low rate of involvement of the Akha in any type of family planning.

B. BIRTH AND DEATH

The number of Akha children born in the last five years have a high percentage of survival and only a few died early. The major factors which help to reverse the birth/death rate are undoubtedly the introduction of modern medicine and improved health and sanitation in most Akha villages within the past decade. As shown in Table 6, there are only 34 deaths, 13 of which are children compared with 167 births.

At present, the Akha population is growing rapidly. While the death rate per year is reduced to just 2.7 per cent (national death rate = 0.8) the birth rate is as high as 13.3 per cent. This makes the rate of growth at 10.6, much higher than the rate of the northern Thai region which reads at 2.0 and the national growth rate at 2.8 (1981) while the target set by the Thai government is 1.5 for the year 1986.

Table 5. Population Classification by Age, Sex, Fertility

Village Name	No. of Males	No. of Females	Age Ranges						Number of Akhas at Fertility Age*	
			0 - 14		15 - 59		60 +		M	F
			M	F	M	F	M	F		
A Yo Mai	72	70	29	29	41	40	2	1	39	32
Saen Chai Mai	109	104	52	40	55	54	2	10	46	44
Saen Chai Kao	125	132	50	54	70	73	5	5	63	65
Huai San Kao	118	93	45	39	70	52	3	2	60	47
Huai San Klang	54	56	24	22	28	32	2	2	23	29
Saen Suk	24	19	11	8	11	9	2	2	10	9
Samakki Mai	35	29	18	11	16	14	1	4	14	12
Pha Mi	44	36	21	12	22	20	1	4	18	17
Doi Sango Bon	25	18	14	7	11	11	-	-	10	10
Huai Pa Kho	48	49	24	20	22	26	2	3	17	23
Total	654	606	288	242	346	331	20	33	300	288
Grand Total	1260		530		677		53		588	
Percentage (%)	100.		42.1		53.7		4.2		46.7**	

* claimed by the Lahu/Akha Survey (1979) as 15-44

** compared with total population of the sample (1260)

Table 6. Numbers of Birth and Death as Counted from 206 households

Number of Children Born to Date	Number of Children Survived to Date	Number of Children Died in Early Ages	Children Born in Last Five Years	Number of Persons Died in Last Five Years	
				Adults	Children
1001	838	163	167	13	21
100.0%	83.7%	16.3%			

- Crude birth rate per year 13.3%
- Crude death rate per year 2.7%
- Growth rate per year 10.6%

In the face of this population explosion the Akha attitude toward the solution of their demographic problem is very confusing. As seen on Tables 7, 8, 9 and 11, the number of Akha marriages is high, the married couples are young, the need for children is great and the number of participants in family planning is less.

According to Table 8, 60.2 per cent opt for more children mainly to counterbalance their need for labour and to carry on their family lines. In contrast, well below fifty per cent have decided to quit because of having had too many, being too old to have them and being unable to bring them up. As the figures indicate slightly more than 50 per cent of the respondents have felt that their economic hardship has barred them from having any more children.

Many Akha have positive attitude toward family planning even though confronted with difficulties in birth control. This certainly can have a bearing in the total Akha population involved in any type of family planning program. The figures shown in Table 10 are indeed very low, but it needs explanation. The fact is that in spite of

Table 7. Akha Marriage Age and Marital Status

No. of Married Persons		Marriage Age					Marital Status				
		M			F		Widow		Divorce		
		16-20	21-25	26-30	16-20	21-25	26-30	M	F	M	F
245	252	88	138	19	157	92	3	10	31	6	1
100% (497) 100%	100%	35.9	56.3 (245) 49.3	7.8	62.3	36.5 (252) 50.7	1.2	4.1 (41) 8.2	12.3 (7)	2.4 1.4	0.4

Table 8. The Needs for Children

Number of Respondents	Number of Children Desired					Need for More Children	
	0-3	4-5	6-7	8-9	10+	Need	Not Answer
206	10	158	33	5	-	124	69 13
100%	4.9	76.7	16.0	2.4	0.0	60.2	33.5 6.3

Table 9. Reasons for Having/Not Having More Children

More Children			No More Children		
To Continue Family Line	Labour	To Care for Parents	Too Old to Have	Unable to Rear	Having Had Too Many
33	81	10	19	36	14
26.6%	65.3%	8.1%	27.5%	52.2%	20.3%

Akha's desire for birth control they do not have proper knowledge about it. Government and private actions over the matter is also minor and have no continuity. This reduces the incentive of many Akha who want to limit their family size. The figures on Table 10 show the number of Akha involved in family planning.

Table 10. Number of Participants Involved in Family Planning

No. of Married Persons		No. of Respondents		Family Planning Types		No. of Participants of the Whole Tribe	
M	F	M	F	Contraceptive	Steril.	Contraceptive	Steril.
245	242	-	78	26	52	240	93
100%	100%	-	30.9%				

The table above shows that out of 497 married respondents only 78 are involved in family planning in the form of reversible contraceptive and sterilization. All participants are women. It must be mentioned also that the number is rather static since 1979 when the family planning program was given to the Akha by the Tribal Integrated Health Project sponsored by McCormick Family Program, Chiang Mai. The program has now been terminated and the Akha respondents are left without further actual motivation. Many Akha want it back but so far little action.

C. MIGRATION

Since having entered the Kingdom most Akha continue with their migrations. In the early years of their settlement such migration took place very often because there is plenty of fertile land available. At present, shrinking land resource as a result of increasing numbers of hill residents reduces the frequency of Akha migration. As the distribution map (Map 2) shows, the density of Akha population today is in Mae Chan district of Chiang Rai province. The reason is that Mae Chan has very long mountainous borders connected to the southern part of Burma. Most Akha from Burma cross the borders at this point where it takes them only 3-5 hours on foot. Most immigrants are illegal and thus dare not move further inland for fear of deportation. For them hiding close to the borders is more convenient so they can turn back when necessary.

The Akha villages except Mae Chan have some social and historical relationship with old settlements situated close to the border. These villages have split from their mother communities years ago to look for better land for cultivation and housing. Most Akha from the first wave of migration to their descendants today have the right to apply for Thai citizenship provided that they meet the regulations and qualifications required by Thai law. Tables 11 and 12 show the frequency and the causes of migration of those included in the sample survey.

On Table 11, it is clear that most Akha have been involved in migration at least once. The frequency of one time claims the largest spot, followed by two and three times respectively. Only a few Akha have had no past experience of migration and a larger proportion of them are young who live in more permanent settlements like Huai San Kao and Saen Chai Kao.

The reasons for migration are due to lack of fertile land for cultivation and desire to join relatives. Thus, when the head of a household moves, his family members go with him at once or join him later. Another reason is the splitting of a small group from the mother base to set up a new village nearby.

Table 11. Frequency of Migration, 1981

Sex	Number of Migrants/Times			Total Immigrants
	One Time	Two Times	Three Times	
Male	103	45	10	158
	65.2%	28.5%	6.3%	52.7%
Female	97	35	10	142
	68.3%	24.6%	7.1%	47.3%
Grand Total	(200)	(80)	(20)	(300)
Percentage (%)	66.7	26.7	6.6	100%

Table 12. Causes of Migration

<u>Causes</u>	<u>Number of Migrants</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
To search for land	129	43.0
To join relatives	91	30.3
To avoid conflict	25	8.3
To marry	21	7.0
To look for security	21	7.0
To seek better living	13	4.4
	—	—
Total	300	100.0
	—	—

CHAPTER IV

THE ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

The Akha economy relies basically upon swidden agriculture. Other economic activities are animal husbandry, gathering and trade. The main activity is rice growing in the swidden field along with various kinds of subsistence crops such as corn, peppers, chili, sesame, millet, jobtears, beans, yams, cucumbers, coffee, tea, tobacco, garlic and vegetables. Food crops are usually mixed in the same field while cash crops, i.e., beans, garlic and cotton are cultivated in separate plots.

Rice growing receives much attention from the Akha since rice is the staple food. In the past, when the forest was plentiful a rice field was used for only a few years repeatedly then left to fallow for a number of years. Because of land limitation at present the Akha can no longer follow this pattern of land use. As a result, they are likely to plant the same rice field for many years in succession despite diminishing soil fertility.

Rice produced from swidden fields is adequate only for domestic supply and no surplus is left for sale. Cash income is meagrely obtainable through the sale of surplus cash crops such as corn, sesame and beans and of wild products like bamboo shoots, insects and flowers of elephant grass. Domestic animals, though not for sale traditionally, are today sometimes raised for commercial purposes. On the one hand, pigs, chickens and water buffaloes are raised for ceremonial sacrifices, although on the other hand, some of them are sold together with other animals like goats, cattle and ducks to reduce economic hardship of the owner. Contact with the lowland Thais also makes the Akha conscious that many kinds of their products could be turned into cash in the lowland market. Aware of this, several Akha today have tried to invest in small trade even though lacking in experience and knowledge.

In short, the Akha economy is considered subsistence. Most Akha produce are for domestic consumption. There is no thought of large investment nor industrial business that would bring them a great amount of profit and saving. Trading activity still does not interest the Akha even though they sometimes sell their surplus in the market. Other economic activities cannot be counted as employment or unemployment except that in a few cases Akha labourers work for their neighbours and get money in return. Wage earning is also new to the Akha. It only came to them in the past few years when economic hardship became critical. The tables in the next pages illustrate some characteristics of the Akha economy at present.

A. OCCUPATION

Most Akha continue to give priority to subsistence agricultural farming. It is found that 95.6 per cent are engaged in swidden agriculture with special concentration on the growing of dry rice, corn and a few other cash crops. Since the Akha have little opportunity for alternatives they shall continue to hold fast to this life line in the future. Other occupations such as animal raising and trade are marginal and have no important role in their economy. For instance, animal raising is not regarded by the Akha as business while employment is thought of only as something to fulfill their need in the times of shortage. No matter what marginal occupation the Akha have, they continue to work in their swidden fields. Table 13 classifies Akha's involvement in various kinds of occupations.

Table 13. Distribution of Occupations

Number of Respondents	Types of Occupation				
	Permanent Swiddener	Village Guard	Teacher (Government)	Government Officers	Merchant
206	197	4	3	1	1
Percentage	95.6	1.9	1.5	0.5	0.5

B. LAND HOLDINGS AND PRODUCTS

Table 15 shows that with the exception of one trader all Akha households are engaged in agriculture and rice cultivation. Each household works land for rice field about 7 rai per year in average (approx. 2.8 acres). This is perhaps the largest size of land any Akha can hold today. Being forced by the influx of immigrants from other places which eventually results in shortage of land, quite a few Akha swiddeners have turned to wet rice growing in the valley simultaneously. The space in the valley, however, is too little to fulfill Akha needs adequately. So far only 138 rai of paddi fields are owned by the Akha and their expansion is slow.

Undoubtedly, the major product of the Akha is rice. In 1981, all households in the sample harvested about 38,481 tangs of rice grain or 187.7 tangs per household. Of the products, 93 per cent came from swidden fields and 7 per cent from rice fields. Other major agricultural products are corn, sesame and soy beans. Corn and sesame are traditionally cultivated for domestic use while soya beans is planted for the purpose of sale. In effect, there are many kinds of crops planted by the Akha but they share no significant part in the Akha economy.

C. ANIMAL HUSBANDRY

At present, the Akha raise several types of animals for domestic use and for sale. Above all, chickens and pigs are indispensable because they are essential for feasts and sacrifices. A few of them are sold to the market when the owners are in extreme need of money for purchasing rice or sending family members for hospitalization. In the past, goats have earned the Akha people a great sum of cash and have thus become popular in Akha society. Nevertheless, since raising goats requires capital for investment many Akha, no matter what their interest, find it hard to cope with the business. Cattle and water buffaloes are also raised in Akha villages, but seemingly by rich men only. The animals are kept for hire, sale and use in special sacrifices

Table 14. Land Holdings for Rice (1981)

Paddi Field		Swidden Field		Total Products	
No. of Holder (Hhs.)	Product (tang)	No. of Holder (Hhs.)	Product (tang)	Product (tang)	Product (tang)
35	2645	205*	35,838	38,481	100.0%
	7.0%		93.0%		

- two villages selected have no paddi field

* 1 case from 206 cases surveyed does not cultivate a rice field

- 1 tang is equal to approx. 20 litres

- 1 rai is equal to 0.4 acre

Table 15. Land used for Major Cash Crops other than Rice

Corn				Sesame				Soy Beans			
Area (rai)	Product (tang)	Consumed (tang)	Sold (tang)	Area (rai)	Product (tang)	Consumed (tang)	Sold (tang)	Area (rai)	Product (tang)	Consumed (tang)	Sold (tang)
157	1165	542	623	79	267	24	243	5	16	4	12
-	100%	46.5%	53.5%	-	100%	8.9%	91.1%	-	100%	25.0%	75.0%

such as in a funeral of an important or aged man. There are also other animals newly introduced into Akha society but yet to attract the villagers, i.e., ducks, sheep and fish. Because of unsuitable conditions in the mountains it is likely that these animals will not gain support.

Chickens are most highly domesticated, followed by pigs, both being used for sacrifices. Goats and cattle are next in rank because of their commercial value.

D. HOUSEHOLD PROPERTIES

The possessions of the Akha could be divided into two categories, the essential and the luxurious. Apart from land, domestic animals and simple houses, the most essential possession of the Akha are long guns and cheap radio receivers. Tenure of land in the mountains is not permanent and ownership changes at will. By Thai law, every inch of upland is reserved and no selling or transfer of right can be made by individual persons. If this law applies it is certain that all Akha tenants will be stripped off their holdings. The traditional house has little value because it is so simple and can be pulled down as desired. Land and the traditional house provide little meaning to the Akha.

Today, a few Akha have developed their living in a more fashionable style. They have come to appreciate modern as well as luxurious things such as costly radios, modern houses, instant foodstuffs and even cosmetics. In order to show off their status, they have acquired new things formerly alien to them, i.e., a ricemill, motorcycle, car, sewing machine or insecticide sprayer. These things are not yet owned by many because only the rich can afford to buy them. In addition, for most Akha these things are not indispensable for they can live comfortably without them.

E. HOUSEHOLD INCOME

The Akha do not have many sources of income. As we shall see

Table 16. Animal Husbandry by Types and Numbers

Number of Raisers	Types of Domestic Animals and Numbers							
	Chickens	Pigs	Water Buffaloes	Goats	Cattle	Ducks	Sheep	Horses
206	1468	765	82	280	243	25	6	31
100%	50.5	26.4	2.8	9.7	8.4	0.9	0.2	1.1
Average/ Household	7.1	3.7	0.39	1.4	1.2	0.12	0.03	0.15

Table 17. Properties other than Land and Animals

No. of Respondents	Items							
	Car	Motorcycle	Radio	Gun	Ricemill	Sewing Machine	Insecticide Sprayer	Modern House
206	1	9	79	79	1	2	5	5

Table 18. Household Income (in Baht)

No. of Respondents	Agricultural Products		Wages	Salaries	Gatherings	Home Industries	Domestic Animals
	Rice	Cash Crops					
206	40,840	43,440	246,708	55,200	27,150	2,500	346,780
Average/Hhs.	198.30	210.87	1197.60	267.90	131.80	12.10	1683.40
- Two respondents are public servants							
- Cash crops are corn, sesame, beans, banana, garlic, lychee, pineapple							
-	Average income/household/year					3702.03	
-	Per capita income					605.25	
-	Chiang Rai per capita income					4112.00 (1977)	
-	National per capita income					9855.00 (1979)	

on Table 18, the principal revenue is derived from selling of field crops, domestic animals and wages. Wages are the second largest source of income. Income derived from subsistence crops is very little.

F. HOUSEHOLD EXPENDITURE

Expenses of the Akha household are mostly for rice and other food. On Table 19, nearly half of the expenditure falls into "rice purchase" category. This points to a serious rice shortage and the Akha's need rice for daily consumption. The need for medicine is also getting higher resulting from government development in the past years. Most Akha today, in spite of the existence of their spirit doctor, tend to look for modern medicine and treatment in combination with the traditional practices.

Table 19. Household Expenditure (in Baht)

Items							
Rice	Construc- tion	Food	Cere- monies	Cloth	House- ware	Medi- cine	Educa- tion
308100	11557	170590	23670	85570	78570	37065	10400
42.5%	1.6%	23.5%	3.3%	11.8%	10.8%	5.1%	1.4%
Average per household							
1495.60	56.10	828.11	114.90	415.39	381.41	179.92	50.48

- Average expenditure per household/year 3521.92

Comparing the average expenditure and the average income on Table 18, it appears that each household has 180.09 ฿ left for saving. This conclusion is, however, illusory since each Akha village has also a number of addicts who must pay a lot to support their habit. The information concerning such payment is reluctantly disclosed by opium smokers and hence not included on Table 19. Certainly, if accurate data could be obtained the entry of opium cost would have a crucial effect upon the balance of the Akha family's income-expenditure sheet.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY

In this final section, all threads of the study are brought together to make the topic tangible in a broad perspective. As mentioned earlier, the discussion of the findings is restricted to data derived mainly from the field survey and a little from library research. Any deviation and discrepancy would therefore bear solely on the field collections.

This report compiles data and figures relevant to the Akha economy and population. It presents the Akha living conditions. Most Akha people are living in a hazardous environment with no alternatives and less opportunities. Problem, solutions and changes imposed on them by external institutions do not seem to contribute much to the improvement of the Akha standard of living. It turns out that while most Akha remain poor many have become even poorer.

This study has shown that the Akha economy and demographic phenomenon are in relatively disadvantageous conditions. Even though data available is not perfect it reveals that the Akha's economy is suffering from a huge increase and maladjustment in population and a shrinking land resource.

As illustrated on Tables 5-12, the population structure is dominated by the younger and middle-aged groups. This points to the fact that there are many in the fertility age group and they play the most significant part in population increase. The birth and growth rates are high whereas the death rate drops sharply. The former is more than twice the 3.0 yearly growth rate for Thailand as a whole (cf. Lewis, 1979: 4). In 1981, the rate of growth climbed to 10.6 and the rate of death diminished to a mere 2.7 per year. This reveals the enormity of the population problem confronting the Akha today. Such a problem may have a connection with some

unknown cultural element or thought. Implicitly, their tradition and belief play important roles. We have found that most of them have positive attitudes toward a large family. As Lewis (1979: 44) reported, most Akha are usually anxious to recruit more members by birth for labour, ceremonies, and social reasons. For instance, the men are obliged by traditional belief to have at least one son to carry on his patri-family line, for fear of extinction of his ethnicity. If no son results from his first marriage, he can marry a second or third wife until he succeeds in getting a son. Most of them also hold that a number of sons would give them better social status, especially in the village meetings. In terms of labour, a number of children are needed for cultivating the fields and as they are agrarian people the children are also regarded as important assets. As shown on Tables 8 and 9, the largest proportion of respondents require 4-5 and 6-7 children in the average, largely for labour use. Those requiring overrides the number of those "not requiring", i.e., 124 to 69. Additionally, their customs in marriage and family planning involvement also encourage population increase. In marriage, many boys and girls tend to wed at an early age and most just past adolescence. These young married couples usually have babies in the first year of their marriage and continue to have more without birth control. This practice contributes to increase in birth rate. The family planning program newly introduced to them does not find a good response. Our survey discloses that only 333 have attended the program. Their participation reached its zenith only during the program's operation carried out by the Tribal Integrated Health Project sponsored by McCormick Family Program in Chiang Mai just before 1980. The termination of the project resulted in the decrease in interest. At present, they do not have a favorable attitude towards birth control. To develop a positive attitude among them, we should pay more attention to organising a more appropriate family planning program which will induce both Akha and government developers to work cooperatively. In moving toward this operation some ideas must be taken into account. For example, they have to accept that a high birth rate is not the sole cause of population

growth. On the other hand, it becomes explicit that the betterment of public health services, modern technology, nutrition and diet, and adoption of modern medical treatment would greatly contribute to the decline in the death rate.

Apart from the traditional concept of population, migration also plays an important part in the demographic structure. As this study discovered, most Akha migrate from one place to another at least once in their lives. This movement, whether within the wide-spread territories of the original village or outside it, can have a great impact upon the imbalance of population density.

It is found that migration is made possible by several factors: soil depletion, internal dispute and epidemics. Migration causes confusion in government attempts to adjust the number of Akha residents to the land resources. The imbalance between space and number of population often leads to shortage and catastrophic famines in food supply and products. Density, though not being the central problem, could become problematic in the long run because the Akha have a carrying limit from their space and resource standpoints. And as their society is based on closed, extractive and exhaustive economy, their future would become even more intolerable under such conditions.

Turning to the economic problem, nobody would deny that land is not the only backbone of production. In retrospect, swidden farming continues to be the most predominant component of the Akha economic system. The farming of rice and field crops is subsistence and the yields are only adequate for household consumption. Other sources of income such as livestock, gathering and trading are subsidiary.

Their living standard is extremely low compared with the rate of income and expenditure of the whole of Thailand. Their per capita income is one-third less and their saving is nil. Being caught in the middle of shrinking land areas on which they can plant rice and crops, products drop markedly. Rice product is deficient at least 4-5 months annually on the average, over the past five years. Accompanying this incident is the fact that most Akha are illiterate thus

they have little opportunity to choose alternative occupations. In this regard, it can be assumed that the largest part of the population is currently facing economic misery and quite a few have sunk to the lowest ebb of their living by turning to begging.

There is an imbalance between the high birth rate and land resource. Theoretically, the extra population could survive economically only when they have enough land to till. But most Akha today live on marginal land not suitable for cultivation and the upland cannot support as many people as the irrigated plains of the lowland. As a result, the high growth rate has become a major problem. The Akha's need for more children is also becoming a paradox because in the time of scarcity a large extended family would mean a disaster to them, not an asset. According to Hawley and Prachuabmoh (1966: 525), an average farm for 6.8 persons in each rural Thai household is 17.9 rai (approx. 7.9 acre). But each Akha household, with a relatively equal number of members (6.1) holds only about a seven-rai plot of land (approx. 2.8 acres) on the average. From this we could imagine how little produce they would gain from their land. Furthermore, they till the land with little chance of receiving legal recognition. The government declares all uplands reserved, hence all upland holdings are not recognised by law. For this reason, Akha tenure and usufruct rights are insecure for they can be negated by the government at will. Unconscious of the significance of legal tenure (Keen, 1969-70: 127), most Akha are then put in the most harmful position and would become homeless whenever the government land law is applied to them.

The Akha economic/population maladjustment is actually not an insurmountable problem. In order to deal with it, those who have duties must not wait until mass starvation emerges. The fact that only 10.5 per cent of the members of the key studied village have sufficient rice for a year while the remaining 89.5 have to struggle, plus the shrinking of land due to increasing numbers of holders and land tillers would have been enough evidence to shake the heart of all developers. To cope with this a more elaborate solution must be

found for the improvement of the Akha standard of living on one hand and to reshuffle Akha population structure to balance with land and food supplies on the other. Immediately, agricultural revolution with great efforts must take place along with an introduction of modern technology to the poorest section of society. In doing so, land tenure, tilling and transaction problems need to receive considerable attention. The Akha must be encouraged to abolish some of their traditional practices, especially subsistence swidden farming, and to accept permanent cultivation, investment and, perhaps, small industrial production instead. To provide them with security in land use the government must reconsider and review the legal status of reserved land held by Akha swiddeners in the hills and make them applicable to the holders at least in the form of leasehold. Early in the year there was an interesting proposal in the meeting held at the Northern Agricultural Development Headquarter in Chiang Mai, that legal and recognised usufruct right of land should be given to the hilltribes people. The idea is to provide the tribesmen with a leasehold tenure with low rent on a specific and limited plot of land. Either of these forms, though not in action so far, would be helpful if applied to the Akha. Once the holding of land is secured the input of modern technology to help increase productivity with special concentration on rice and cash crops as well as re-adjustment of population structure and a control of migration can be promoted strongly.

Certainly, the economic plan should go right along with the family planning programs for neither will be complete without the other (Lewis, 1979: 73). The betterment of the economy whether in the form of increasing the amount of productive land or encouraging economic stability by permanent paddy field and cash crops which were in the past out of the Akha's reach could be the greatest motives for the Akha in controlling population. In the past, several developing societies found that their greatest efforts to gain economic betterment failed significantly due to rapid population growth.

Whenever a population grows much faster than its economy, starvation, ill health and social unrest become threats on the horizon. Berelson (1969:325) cited that a population growth of 2.5-3 per cent a year is a heavy burden. If so, the Akha's 10.6 growth rate would bar the people from any chance of raising their standard of living. It seems that an active family planning program for the Akha is inevitable and must always be incorporated in government development plans.

At present, little has been done successfully for Akha and much more remains to be done. With an increasing awareness of the importance of the problem, it is expected that many programs will be put forward to Akha without delay, while the modern way of life is intruding on the traditional community. All substantial obstacles either resulting from the Akha's own tradition concerning the need for a large family, subsistence economic system or disapproval of modern introduction would have to be brushed aside.

Indeed, the Akha are like other people in that they need security of living. There is a chain reaction connected to change and acceptance of a new behaviour. In dealing with such circumstances the Akha's need for survival must be made clearly understood. If no motivation is given to educate the Akha then adjustment of their economy and population problems shall never succeed. For the Akha, the motivation is to be made to the male members for they alone have decisive authority over the continuity of the family lines, over domestic affairs and activities of the household. On the other hand, the introduction of development programs to the whole community must be channelled through the village leaders for support and cooperation.

Finally, any effort to bring innovation to traditional communities like the Akha will require a substantial and continuing effort.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Becker, G.S. (1960)
"An Economic Analysis of Fertility," Demographic and Economic Change in Development Countries. Princeton University Press.
- Berelson, B. (ed.) (1969)
Population: Challenging World Crisis. Washington D.C., Voice of America Forum Series.
- Bernatzik, H.A. (1947)
Akha und Meau: Probleme der Angewandten Volkerkunde in Hinterindien, 2 vols., Innsbruck Wagenerische Universitäts. English translation by A.J. Lewis.
- Clark, C. and M.R. Haswell (1966)
The Economic of Subsistence Agriculture. 2nd ed., New York, St. Martin's Press.
- Dalton, G. (ed.) (1967)
Tribal and Peasant Economies. New York, The Natural History Press.
- Dellinger, D. and Peter Wyss (1969)
"Some comments on Akha: its relationships, structure, and a proposal for a writing system," in Tribesmen and Peasants in North Thailand. ed. Peter Hinton, pp. 108-112, Tribal Research Centre, Chiang Mai.
- Enke, S. (1963)
Economic for Development. New Jersey, Prentice Hall.
- Kamnuansilpa, P. (1978)
Socio-Economic and Demographic Analysis of Female Labour Force Participation. SEAPRAP Research Report No. 25, Singapore.
- Keen, F.G.B. (1970)
Upland Tenure and Land Use in North Thailand. The SEATO Cultural Program, Bangkok, The Siam Communication Ltd.

Kewthep, K. (1976)

Rapid Population Growth and Its Impacts on Rural Poverty and Landlessness. SEAPRAP Research Report No. 13, Singapore.

Khankaew, S. and Paul Lewis (1979)

A Report of the 1979 Lahu/Akha Survey. Chiang Mai, Tippanet Karn Pim.

Lebar, F.M. et al (eds.) (1964)

Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia. Human Relations Area Files Press.

Lewis, P. (1973)

A Proposal for the Development of a Family Planning Program Among the Akhas of Thailand. Oregon, University of Oregon.

Ling, Ooi Giok. (1978)

The Geography of Socioeconomic Health and Distress in Northwestern Peninsular Malaysia. SEAPRAP Research Report No. 30, Singapore.

McArthur, N. (1961)

Introducing Population Statistics. Melbourne, Oxford University Press.

Mellor, J.W. (1966)

The Economics of Agricultural Development. Cornell Paperbacks, Ithaca, Cornell University Press.

Panjaphongse, C. and Narong Tiensong (1976)

Thailand: Population and Population Education. 1st ed., Bangkok, Thai Watana Panich.

Rowe, V.C. (1977)

Population Characteristics, Production and Land Utilization Practices of Shifting Cultivators in Negros Island, Philippines. SEAPRAP Research Report No. 20, Singapore.

Shevasunt, S. and Seksin Srivatananukulkit (1982)

Ing-Yom Diversion Project Sociology and Community Structure. Chiang Mai, Social Research Institute, Chiangmai University.

Soebandi. (1977)

Social and Economic Influence on Family Size in the District of Malang, East Java. SEAPRAP Research Report No. 15, Singapore.

Van, Roy Edward (1971)

Economic Systems of northern Thailand, Structure and Change. Ithaca, Cornell University Press.

Vitiprod, Charoon (1979)

Rapid Population Growth, Living Conditions and Fertility Reduction Implication (Bangkok Metropolis). SEAPRAP Research Report No. 37, Singapore.

Wongprasert, Sanit (1980)

Highland-Lowland Migration: A Study of Lahu and Meo Movements Toward Majority Life. Research Report, Chiang Mai, Tribal Research Centre.

Young, O.G. (1961)

The Hilltribes of Northern Thailand. A Socio-Ethnological Report, Chiang Mai, pp. 1-11.

SEAPRAP

THE SOUTHEAST ASIA POPULATION RESEARCH AWARDS PROGRAM

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- * To strengthen the research capabilities of young Southeast Asian social scientists, and to provide them with technical support and guidance if required.
- * To increase the quantity and quality of social science research on population problems in Southeast Asia.
- * To facilitate the flow of information about population research developed in the program as well as its implications for policy and planning among researchers in the region, and between researchers, government planners and policy makers.

ILLUSTRATIVE RESEARCH AREAS

The range of the research areas include a wide variety of research problems relating to population, but excludes reproductive biology. The following are some examples of research areas that could fall within the general focus of the Program:

- * Factors contributing to or related to fertility regulation and family planning programs; familial, psychological, social, political and economic effects of family planning and contraception.
- * Antecedents, processes, and consequences (demographic, cultural, social, psychological, political, economic) of population structure, distribution, growth and change.
- * Family structure, sexual behaviour and the relationship between child-bearing patterns and child development.
- * Inter-relationships between population variables and the process of social and economic development (housing, education, health, quality of the environment, etc).
- * Population policy, including the interaction of population variables and economic policies, policy implications of population distribution and movement with reference to both urban and rural settings, and the interaction of population variables and law.
- * Evaluation of on-going population education programs and/or development of knowledge-based population education program.

- * Incentive schemes — infrastructures, opportunities; overall economic and social development programs.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Selection will be made by a Program Committee of distinguished Southeast Asian scholars in the social sciences and population. The following factors will be considered in evaluating research proposals:

1. relevance of the proposed research to current issues of population in the particular countries of Southeast Asia;
2. its potential contribution to policy formation, program implementation, and problem solving;
3. adequacy of research design, including problem definition, method of procedure, proposed mode of analysis, and knowledge of literature;
4. feasibility of the project, including time requirement; budget; and availability, accessibility, and reliability of data;
5. Applicant's potential for further development.

DURATION AND AMOUNT OF AWARDS

Research awards will be made for a period of up to one year. In exceptional cases, requests for limited extension may be considered. The amount of an award will depend on location, type and size of the project, but the maximum should not exceed US\$7,500.

QUALIFICATIONS OF APPLICANTS

The Program is open to nationals of the following countries: Burma, Indonesia, Kampuchea, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. Particular emphasis will be placed on attracting young social scientists in provincial areas.

Applications are invited from the following:

- * Graduate students in thesis programs
- * Faculty members
- * Staff members in appropriate governmental and other organizations.

Full-time commitment is preferable but applicants must at least be able to devote a substantial part of their time to the research project. Advisers may be provided, depending on the needs of applicants.